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Me and Earl and the Dying Girl

While reading *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, written by Jesse Andrews, throughout the semester, the literature circles that were required every Friday were very helpful. Not only did these sessions allow my group to discuss and analyze the assigned text in ways that we would not normally do on our own, but they also allowed us to act a different leadership role each week. *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* would not be a book that I would tend to choose for my leisure reading, but I did enjoy reading it. While in my literature circle, we discussed many aspects of the book and talked about the main events that took place in each section of the text. In this essay, I will analyze our concluding thoughts about the purpose of the text, Greg as a character, the audience that is mainly addressed in this novel, and the importance of the genre that was selected to write this book.

While reading this book, I would often stop and wonder what the main purpose was that the author was trying to get across. There seemed to be no point in telling this story, besides for entertainment, and no message that was trying to be conveyed. In fact, all throughout the novel, the main character, Greg Gaines, says things like, “ I can’t believe you’re still reading this” (page 84). He often indicates that there really isn’t a point to the story. It is not until the epilogue, however, that the reader is informed of the purpose of this story told by Greg. Originally, Greg was accepted into the University of Pittsburgh, but because of his bad grades, his admission was suspended. He explains that this was written in an attempt to get back in. By having the purpose of the story at the end of the book, it keeps the readers wondering and keeps it suspenseful.

In the beginning of this novel, Greg Gaines seems like a very dull character. He is not very attractive, and his life is pretty uneventful aside from filmmaking. He does not fit into any of the “groups” in high school, so he tries to fit into all of them by trying to please everyone. His only true friend, if you can call it that, is Earl Jackson. As the story goes on, however, Greg seems to have a more dynamic character than is perceived. This side of him comes through especially after Rachel is diagnosed with leukemia. At first, he is only visiting her to please his mom, but as time goes on, he classifies Rachel as his friend. This is a change in Greg because he mentions early on that he never really wanted friends. Also, by the end of the novel, Greg seems to establish a purpose in his life. Throughout the book, he never thought he would amount to anything. By the epilogue, however, he has a goal of going to film school. He never thought much of his films before and he explains that he does not like the person that he has been in the past, but he is fine with the way he is now. Even if it is slight, there is a change in Greg’s character by the end of the book.

The audience that is most suitable for this book is probably high school teenagers. Since Greg is writing this as a high school student, it makes it most relatable to that age group. The different social groups that Greg talks about, the everyday problems and situations in his high school that he explains, and the sometimes dirty language that he uses can best connect to high school students because they have the same kind of experiences. Also, it is a time where Greg is a senior in high school, and he is trying to decide his future. Many high school students also feel the stress of their upcoming years and their transition into new environments. As a result, teenagers are most likely to enjoy this book more than adults.

*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* is written using very informal language and grammar. The genre is a story told by Greg, a teenage boy who is not very fond of school, so this form of writing is fitting. Also included in this genre are random sections of text that are written like a play or a movie script. Greg loves to film movies so it makes sense to have him write some of the text as he would act out a movie. The parts that were written in script form allow for the readers to get a better sense for the actions that are taking place and also the characters emotions. I enjoyed reading this style of writing because it was as if Greg was talking to us in a conversation. This genre really helps to add to Greg’s character.

Overall, the literature circles helped me to consider many things about this book with my peers that I would not normally take note of. With my group members, I have a better sense of the purpose of the text, Greg as a character, the audience that is targeted for the book, and the genre that was selected to write this book. In writing this essay, I used the feedback that I received from my interview essay to improve my work. I was sure to include my purpose of sharing my thoughts about the literature circles and some of the information that my group discussed, my thesis statement which previewed the topics that would be covered in my essay, the audience that the book was written for, and evidence based paragraphs that include the 3 INs with information from the book. Together, each of these paragraphs are linked to form one school essay about my groups ideas from our literature circle for *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*.